



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

No. CCCL.

---

JANUARY, 1886.

---

## THE SHILOH CAMPAIGN.

---

### PART I.

I HAD always hesitated and persistently declined giving to the public an account of this period of the war. That duty, it seemed to me, devolved upon one not so directly and intimately connected as I was with the events to be there recorded. But, with a few exceptions, the statements—most of them intentionally erroneous—published of late on the subject to be treated here, tend to such an extent to distort the truth of history, and so many strictures have been passed upon me in that connection, that, putting aside all personal feeling, I deem it incumbent on me to prepare a concise but complete and correct narrative of the whole Shiloh Campaign, from the time of my arrival in General Albert Sidney Johnston's department, in February, 1862, up to and including the battle of Shiloh—April 6 and 7—and the retreat of the Confederate forces from Corinth. In a work entitled "Military Operations of General Beauregard," which was but lately offered to the public, are contained all the details of what was accomplished at that time; as also the causes which brought about the results there depicted. It was "written from notes and documents authenticated by me," and "is offered as a guide to the future historian" of the war

VOL. CXLII.—NO. 350.

1

between the States.\* But books are not read by the many, and seldom reach the circulation attained by leading periodicals of this and other countries. Hence my determination to revive the matter in these pages.

---

Colonel Roger A. Pryor, of Virginia, a member of the Military Committee of the lower house of the Confederate Congress, called on me at my head-quarters, in Centreville, on the 22d January, 1862; and, speaking in his own name, in that of his colleagues of the Committee, and also of the different representatives of the Mississippi Valley States, at that time in Richmond, told me, substantially, that Zollicoffer's defeat, which had just occurred at Spring Mill, in Eastern Kentucky, necessitated prompt and energetic measures on the part of the government, and that it was a very general desire, in which President Davis joined, that I should be sent at once to the Mississippi Valley, where much discouragement existed, and where, it was believed, my presence might restore confidence and lead to more active and safer operations in the near future. This overture, and the gratifying manner in which it was made, took me by surprise. My answer was at first uncertain. I could not deny my services to the cause, wherever I might be ordered; but the idea of cutting short my relations with an army I had so materially assisted in organizing and in leading to victory, made me hesitant and forbade a ready assent on my part. I asked for time to reflect. After reflection and on the assurance, otherwise made, that General Albert Sidney Johnston, in whose military department I was about to go, had under him, at different places, an aggregate of at least seventy thousand men of all arms, which would allow early concentration of his forces and consequent aggressive movements on our part, I finally yielded consent, and so informed Colonel Pryor.

The concluding passage of the order of the War Department directing the transfer referred to, bore date January 26th, and read as follows:

"He (the President) therefore desires that you proceed at once to report to General A. S. Johnston, at Bowling Green, Kentucky, and thence proceed, as promptly as possible, to assume your new command at Columbus, which is threatened by a powerful force, and the successful defense of which is of vital importance."

\* By Colonel Alfred Roman, of Louisiana. Published by Harper & Brothers, New York. 1864.

I was only able to leave Manassas on the 2d of February. I had previously sent several suggestions to the War Department, through General (then Colonel) Jordan, my chief of staff, with a view to perfect the organization of the troops I was soon to command, for the efficiency of which, as I had been led to believe, much had yet to be done.

I had never met General A. S. Johnston prior to my arrival at Bowling Green. He welcomed me in his department with that simple, dignified and earnest manner so characteristic of him, and which, I well remember, made a profound impression upon me.

He informed me of the position and strength of the enemy, and did the same as to his own forces. General Buell's command was then at Bacon Creek, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, not farther than forty miles from Bowling Green, and consisted of fully seventy-five thousand men. General Grant was near Cairo, and had twenty thousand men with him, ready to move either against Fort Henry or Fort Donelson, as might best serve his purpose. General Pope commanded not less than thirty-thousand men, in the State of Missouri, and was, just then, seriously threatening General Polk's position. General Halleck, the commander-in-chief of the above enumerated Federal forces, was still at St. Louis, his department head-quarters, and had, at the time referred to, subject to his general orders, an aggregate of one hundred and twenty-five thousand men of all arms.

General Johnston, on the other hand, had but forty-five thousand effectives of all arms, in his large department. They were distributed as follows:—fourteen thousand, with General Johnston, at Bowling Green; some five thousand five hundred at Forts Henry and Donelson; about eight thousand at or near Clarksville; and fifteen thousand, under General Polk, in West Tennessee and West Kentucky. These were barely organized and very poorly armed. Such, in fact, was the case with most of Generals Clark's and Pillow's forces at Clarksville and Hopkinsville, to say nothing of the others. There were men, by tens of thousands, in Kentucky, in Tennessee, and in the adjoining States, ready at any day to enlist under the Southern banner, and who were actually burning with the desire to do so; but the government had no arms to give them. None had been procured, as yet, from Europe, and none could be manufactured at home—that is to say, in any number approaching sufficiency for the requirements of the hour.

General Johnston also told me that the works on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, upon which so much depended for the safety of these streams, were defective in more than one respect, and could not be relied on; that General (then Major) Gilmer, his chief engineer, had been sent to them with a view of improving their effectiveness, if possible, before it was too late.

I was deeply disturbed when thus made acquainted with the real condition of affairs in General Johnston's department. His surprise was equal to my disappointment when I assured him of the War Department's estimate of his strength. My first impulse was to return at once to Virginia, so powerless did I feel in the presence of the frightful odds existing against us. But General Johnston urged me to remain, and in a manner so earnest, that I acceded to his request and concluded not to leave him in the hard strait in which he was placed. My opinion has ever been that the War Department had not dealt justly toward General Johnston, and had sacrificed him to its own improvidence and neglectful state of unpreparedness.

On the 5th of February, I inspected, with General Johnston, all the works erected at and around Bowling Green. They were unquestionably strong; but besides having consumed too much time and labor, which could have been more wisely expended at other points—notably at Forts Henry and Donelson—it was evident to me that they could be turned, on the right, a few miles above, should a vigorous and well-directed attack be made upon them in that quarter. It appeared to me that it would have been sufficient, and far better, to limit the Bowling Green works to a *tête de pont*, north of the Barren River, and to one fort only, south of the same stream. I so stated to General Johnston, who made no direct reply, but said that, in case of an advance of the enemy, on his flanks, he would withdraw his forces from Bowling Green, as he had no army of relief to call to his assistance.

I gave General Johnston my views as to the best plan for holding Fort Henry, then seriously menaced by General Grant, and which was absolutely necessary to insure the command of the Tennessee River. I told him that, owing to the defective location of Forts Henry and Donelson, at about the middle—and at a re-entering angle—of our defensive line, weakened by the intersection of the two rivers on which the forts were built; owing also to the saliency of our flanks at Bowling Green and Columbus, which fa-

cilitated the turning of the first—Bowling Green—thus compelling it to fall by its own weight, and rendering the second—Columbus—clearly untenable, should Henry succumb, I thought it not only advisable, but of absolute necessity, to abandon Bowling Green without further delay, using it hereafter as a point of observation merely, and to concentrate at once all our available troops upon Henry and Donelson, and thus force General Grant to give us battle there, with every chance of success in our favor, and hardly any hope by him of obtaining assistance elsewhere. The adoption, I said, and above all the vigorous execution of such a plan, would not only restore to us the full control of the Tennessee, but insure likewise the possession of the Cumberland, and eventually secure a much better position to our troops as to the defense of Nashville.

My views were not adopted. General Johnston agreed to their correctness, in a strategic point of view, but feared that a failure to defeat General Grant, as proposed, would jeopardize the security of our positions at other points, and might possibly cause our forces to be crushed between Grant and Buell. His opinion was that, situated as we then were, we should endeavor to gain time, and thus be enabled to save the large stock of supplies and ammunition which the government, with its usual want of foresight, had gathered at Bowling Green, Clarksville and Nashville.

In differing with me on that occasion, as he did, General Johnston clearly lost sight of the following facts: that General Buell had no pontoon train at his disposal; that he could not have crossed the Cumberland between Nashville and Donelson; that we would have had ample time to withdraw our forces from the Tennessee and Cumberland, and take a position in rear of the new line formed at Duck River; that we could even have retreated as far as Nashville, before falling against General Buell, who would have had a much longer march to make; that, in war, success always depends on prompt and vigorous concentration of masses against fractions, and that we then held the interior lines.

Fort Henry fell. Its resistance did not last over a day. Impartial history will not hold General Tilghman responsible for the fall of a work which was known, from the first, to be untenable, and which was attacked by a strong land and naval force. "The railroad bridge, only about twelve miles south of Fort Henry, was now burned by the Federal gun-boats, and that line

of communication between General Johnston and his forces at Columbus, Western Kentucky, was cut off, as had been apprehended, leaving, as the shortest route available, the line of railroad by Nashville, Decatur, Corinth and Jackson." \*

The day following—February 7—I again urged the carrying out of the plan of concentration delineated above, which, in my opinion, was imperative at that juncture, and clearly practicable when we consider that the investment of Fort Donelson was only begun on the 13th of February, and the work surrendered on the morning of the 16th. Our troops, transferred by rail and by water, could have reached Donelson on the 10th, at the latest; whereas General Buell's forces, with rough roads of fully one hundred and twenty-five miles before them, could not, possibly, have operated a junction with General Grant before the 17th. On the morning of the 13th, General Grant was at the head of fifteen thousand men. He was only reinforced † on the evening of that day. We could have had, to oppose him, on the 10th—say even on the 12th—ten thousand men, out of the fourteen thousand with General Johnston, at Bowling Green; eight thousand men under General Floyd, at Russellville; three thousand more, at Clarksville; and these, with five thousand seven hundred more, already at Donelson, would have aggregated a force of nearly twenty-seven thousand men. That force, under General Johnston, or even under myself—for I would have willingly marched on with them to Donelson—would have assured us victory over General Grant's fifteen thousand men; and not only would Fort Donelson have thus been held—for some time to come, at any rate—but we would also have regained Fort Henry before the advent of General Buell. It must be borne in mind that there had been no conflict, worthy of the name, at Donelson, prior to the 15th, and that it was brought on by the advance of our own forces, the enemy having, at first, clearly given way to the impetuous attack made upon him. It is, therefore, but fair to conclude that, with the reinforcements we could have brought to bear against General Grant at that time, the fight would have unquestionably resulted in something more than a mere appearance of victory on the part of the Confederates.

But General Johnston adhered to his own views, as expressed in a memorandum drawn up by General Hardee and myself, on the

\* "Military Operations of General Beauregard," Vol. I., Chap. XV., p. 219.

† By 10,000 men.

7th of February, and given in full in "Military Operations of General Beauregard."\* It was then determined, that Fort Henry having fallen, and Fort Donelson not being tenable, "*preparations* should at once be made for the removal" of the army of Bowling Green "to Nashville;" that "the troops at Clarksville would cross over to the south of the Cumberland, leaving behind them a force sufficient to protect the manufactories and other property" established there by the government; that "from Nashville, should any further retrograde movement become necessary," it would "be made to Stevenson, and thence according to circumstances."

"It was also determined that the possession of the Tennessee River by the enemy . . . separates the army at Bowling Green from the army at Columbus, Kentucky, which must henceforth act independently of each other until they again be brought together." That, should the line of communication of the army of Columbus be threatened by an overwhelming force, concentrating from various points on the Ohio, "the main body of that army would fall back to Humboldt, and thence, if necessary, to Grand Junction, so as to protect Memphis from either point, and still have a line of retreat to the latter point, or to Grenada, Mississippi, and, if necessary, to Jackson, Mississippi."

The evacuation of Bowling Green was only begun on the 11th of February. I left the next day; but, before doing so, again expressed my views on the condition of affairs around us, in a letter to General Johnston, dated Bowling Green, February 12th, 1862, wherein the following passages occur:

"It also becomes evident that, by the possession of that river (Tennessee), the enemy can concentrate rapidly, by means of his innumerable transports, all his disposable forces on any point along its banks, either to attack Nashville, in rear, or cut off the communications of Columbus by the Mississippi River with Memphis, and by the railroads with the Memphis and Charleston Railroad."

"Should the enemy determine on the former plan of operations, your army, threatened also in front and on the right flank by Buell's large army, will be in a very critical condition, and may be forced to take refuge on the south side of the Tennessee River. But should Halleck adopt the second plan referred to, the position at Columbus will then become no longer tenable for an army inferior in strength to that of the enemy, and must fall back to some central point, where it can guard the main railroads to Memphis, *i. e.*, from Louisville and from Charleston. Jackson, Tennessee, would probably be the best position



for such an object, with strong detachments at Humboldt and Corinth, and with the necessary advance guards." . . . . .

"Columbus must either be left to be defended to the last extremity by its proper garrison, assisted by Hollin's fleet of gunboats, and provided with provisions and ammunition for several months, or abandoned altogether, its armament and garrison being transferred, if practicable, to Fort Pillow, which, I am informed, is naturally and artificially a strong position, about fifty miles above Memphis.

"Island No. 10, near New Madrid, could also be held by its garrison, assisted by Hollin's fleet, until the possession of New Madrid by the enemy would compel that position to be evacuated. I am clearly of the opinion that to attempt at present to hold so advanced a position as Columbus, with the movable army under General Polk, when its communications can be so readily cut off by a surprise force acting from the Tennessee River as a new base, would be to jeopardize, not only the safety of that army, but, necessarily, of the whole Mississippi Valley. Hence I desire, as far as practicable, specific instructions as to the future movements of the army of which I am about to assume command. If it be necessary for the safety of the country to make, with all my forces, a desperate stand at Columbus, I am ready to do so."

General Johnston's answer was given me verbally, at Edgefield, opposite Nashville, on the 14th of February. He said his views had undergone no change since our last conference at Bowling Green, except as to the abandonment of Columbus, and that he would abide by the decision of the War Department in that respect. "His line of retreat, he also said, when forced to withdraw from Nashville, would be along the Nashville, Stevenson and Chattanooga Railroad."

I left Nashville on the 15th, and, on my arrival at Corinth, the next day, found two telegrams awaiting me—one from General Johnston, the other from Colonel Mackall, his chief of staff. Both announced the fall of Fort Donelson. General Johnston's read as follows :

"NASHVILLE, *February* 16, 1862.

"At 2 A.M. to day, Fort Donelson surrendered. We lost all."

Colonel Mackall's dispatch began with the same words, but ended thus :

"We lost all the army except half of Floyd's brigade, which crossed the river. The head of our column is about reaching Nashville."

I was much grieved at this news, but not taken by surprise. The fall of Donelson, without an effort in season to come to its

succor, was almost inevitable. In a letter written by me to Colonel Roger A. Pryor, on the 14th of February, 1862, I said :

"We must give up some minor points, and concentrate our forces to save the most important ones, or we will lose all of them in succession. The loss of Fort Donelson—(God grant it may not fall!)—would be followed by consequences too lamentable to be now alluded to."

It were scarcely possible to depict the feeling of consternation, anxiety and distrust that spread over the entire section of country comprised within the bounds of General Johnston's department at the announcement of these disastrous events. The people were panic-stricken. The army was all but demoralized. A clamor, as loud as it was unfair, arose from almost every neighboring city, town or hamlet, against the general commanding our forces in the West. Cries of his incompetency—of his disloyalty, even—were uttered by many. He withstood the storm with firmness and manliness, and was uncomplaining. But those who understood the depth and scope of his nature and had studied the course of action followed at Richmond toward our forces in the West, at that time and later on, were not long in discovering on whose shoulders to lay most of the blame that so weighted him down.

On the same day, February 16th, in answer to a dispatch of mine, asking if any direct orders had been issued to General Polk with regard to the troops at and around Columbus, Colonel Mackall, A.A.G., sent me this telegram :

· · · "You must do as your judgment dictates. No orders for your troops have issued from here."

And General Johnston, in another telegram, dated February 18th, said :

"You must now act as seems best to you. The separation of our armies is now complete."

I was then at Jackson, Tennessee, where Colonel Jordan, my chief of staff, had just arrived, after an inspection tour at Columbus. His report, coupled with that of Captain Harris, my chief engineer, about the exaggerated extension of the lines there, the defective location of the works, and the faulty organization of the troops, strengthened my own opinion as to the inability of Columbus to withstand a serious attack, and rendered more imperative still the necessity of its early evacuation. General Polk, who had considered the situation in a different light, and who believed in

the defensive capacity of the place, was at first averse to the movement. He changed his mind, however, upon my showing him the saliency of Fort Columbus and the weak points of its construction, and cheerfully carried out my instructions, when, on the 19th of February, the War Department having given its consent to the evacuation, he was ordered "to prepare for it without delay."

The supplies and materials kept in reserve were to be forwarded by railroad to Grenada and Columbus; the remaining ones, to Union City, Humboldt, Madrid Bend, New Madrid, and Memphis. The heaviest guns were to be sent to Island No. 10, to the batteries already erected at Madrid Bend and to New Madrid. Guns of a lighter caliber, for the land defenses of the latter place, were also ordered there. Immediate steps were to be taken to prepare for the removal of the other guns to Madrid Bend and Fort Pillow. The greatest precautions were to be observed while carrying on this work, which was to be done at night only, if possible. Columbus was to be held until the batteries at Island No. 10 and at Madrid Bend were reported ready for the defense of the river.

The batteries at the head of Island No. 10 and at Madrid Bend were not intended for permanent occupation; but Fort Pillow was, and was being strengthened, as much as practicable, for that purpose. Captain Harris, who was already an efficient engineer at the time of which I write, and who made such a brilliant record afterward, at Charleston, at Savannah, as also at Drury's Bluff and Petersburg, had received most minute instructions from me, "as to the planning, laying out, and construction of these batteries, including the details of their parapets, embrasures, traverses, and magazines."\* He had been ordered, besides, to repair to Fort Pillow, as soon as he could, with a view to reducing it to a garrison of about three thousand men, thus remedying, as far as possible, the error originally committed there, of preparing that work for a force of from nine to ten thousand men.†

\* "Military Operations of General Beauregard," Vol. I., Chap. XVI, p. 236.

† "The grave defect in these river defenses, at Columbus and Fort Pillow, was in their extended lines, requiring a whole army to hold them, leaving no forces for operations in the field. This was one of the great mistakes in engineering on both sides during the war. A garrison of from three to five thousand men, in properly constructed forts, with an ample supply of ammunition and provisions, would have been sufficient for the defense of our principal rivers until reinforcements, in an emergency, could have been sent to their relief."—"Military Operations of General Beauregard," Vol. I., Chap. XVI, p. 237.

The evacuation of Columbus was begun on the 25th of February. That it was a military necessity none will now deny, except perhaps some blind partisan who may take upon himself to criticise and condemn, without adequate knowledge upon the subject, and without assigning any reason or proof in support of his assertion. If it were a "mistake" to have evacuated Columbus at that time, the responsibility should rest as much upon General Johnston, who agreed to it, as upon myself, who suggested the movement, but only ordered it after being authorized to do so by the War Department. I was ready to defend Columbus "*to the last extremity*" if so ordered by the commanding general, and had so expressed myself in my letter to him, dated Bowling Green, February 12, 1862, already referred to in this article. I knew, however, it would be disastrous in the extreme to attempt such a defense, situated as we then were. General Johnston, who understood the crisis far better than those who presume to interpret him to-day, required no persuasion to adopt this course, and did so, not as a concession to me, but clearly because he was convinced of its advisability. "To defend Columbus" at that time, "with a reduced garrison, and withdraw Polk and his army for active movements," \* was never even hinted at by General Johnston, in any of our conferences on the subject; and was, I may add, a physical impossibility, as no "*reduced garrison*" could have defended Columbus, when it is considered that "the works at that place were made for a garrison of at least thirteen thousand men, armed with one hundred and forty (mostly heavy) guns."† Evidently no army at all would have been left to General Polk for "*active movements*" in the field.

At that time (February 25) I had not yet formally assumed command of the military district assigned to me. My health was impaired, and had been, even before my leaving Bowling Green, on the 12th, and, in fact, prior to my departure from Centreville, Virginia. My endeavors, however, to become acquainted with every point included in my new command, had been incessant; and General Polk, though not actually relieved from his duties as commander of his district, had kindly allowed me not only to advise him, but also, in a great measure, to direct his own as well

\* See Colonel W. P. Johnston's article, in "Century Magazine" of February, 1885, p. 618.

† "Military Operations of General Beauregard," Vol. I., Chap. XV., p. 228.

as the movements of the forces directly under him. General Johnston favored the course I was then pursuing, as can be seen by the following telegram, dated Murfreesboro, February 21st, from Colonel Mackall, A. A. G., speaking in General Johnson's name :

"If not well enough to assume command, I hope that you, now having had time to study the field, will advise General Polk of your judgment as to the proper disposition of his army, in accordance with the views you entertain in your Memorandum, unless you have changed your views. I can't order him, not knowing but what you have assumed command, and your orders conflict."

Meanwhile, General Johnston, threatened by General Buell's large army, had been compelled to withdraw from Nashville, his rear guard marching out of that city late on the evening of the 23d of February. His line of retreat, as already agreed upon, was toward Stevenson, North-eastern Alabama. He had with him, at that time, an aggregate of some seventeen thousand men.

It was at this most critical juncture of our affairs, that, taking advantage of the latitude given me by General Johnston's telegram of February 18th, and knowing how important it was that we should adopt prompt measures to improve the situation and instill new confidence in the people, I came to the conclusion to abandon at once the "passive-defensive," which had led us, so far, to disaster only, and to inaugurate instead the entirely opposite system of aggressive warfare, as the best chance—if not the only hope—of recovering some of our lost ground.

The prospect was far from encouraging. General Johnston was retreating toward North-eastern Alabama and Georgia. The distance between his sorely tried troops and those who were still under General Polk was daily increasing instead of diminishing. General Grant, on the other hand, emboldened by his recent successes at Henry and Donelson, could, almost unimpeded, move at once, either upon the rear of Columbus and thus strike it a death-blow ; or he could ascend the Tennessee River as far as Hamburg or Eastport, seize the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, thereby completely separating the two Confederate armies, turning West Kentucky and West Tennessee ; and, finally, taking Memphis, Fort Pillow, New Madrid, Island No. 10 and Columbus ; which would have given him possession of the entire Mississippi Valley.

The only forces I could control at the time were about fifteen thousand men, under General Polk, stationed at the various Mis-

Mississippi River defenses ; some two thousand more, at or near Iuka, under General Chalmers ; and three thousand already at Corinth, with Brigadier-General Ruggles ; aggregating twenty thousand men of all arms, not thoroughly organized, and very poorly armed and equipped.

My plan was to operate with my movable forces, not on the defensive line adopted by General Johnston, as agreed upon at Bowling Green, on the 7th of February,\* but on an entirely new line, starting from Island No. 10, and extending to Corinth, through Union City, Humboldt and Jackson—thus throwing my forces across the Louisville and Memphis, and the Memphis and Charleston railroads ; covering Memphis, and covering the railroad center at Corinth, with as strong a force as possible at Iuka, and a smaller one at Tusculumbia, in order to secure my railroad communication with the East. Holding the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, as I then did, I could have thus concentrated rapidly, with a view, either to face the enemy, in an attempt on his part to threaten the Louisville and Memphis Railroad, or even, if circumstances favored me, to directly attack him, should he try to land along the bend of the Tennessee River, at any point between Coffee Landing and Eastport.

To carry out such a plan more troops were needed, and I was not ignorant of the difficulty to be met with in my effort to procure them. Time, also, was a very important factor to be considered, for it was apparent to me that, should the enemy be bold and push forward his advantages, we could not hope to be a successful barrier in his way.

I resolved to send messengers at once to the governors of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, with a circular addressed to each of them, in which I endeavored to explain the inevitable result to us of additional disasters to our arms, and asking each of them to forward to me, with the utmost celerity, from five thousand to ten thousand men, already armed and equipped, their services not to be taken advantage of for more than ninety days, which, I believed, would be sufficient to enable us, by timely and vigorous action, to “recover our losses, and insure the defense of the Mississippi River.”† I also made an

\* See Memorandum already referred to, Vol. I., Chap. XV., p. 220, “Military Operations of General Beauregard.”

† See Circular referred to, in “Military Operations of General Beauregard,” Vol. I., Chap. XVI., pp. 240, 241.

appeal to General Bragg, asking him for such troops as he could send from Mobile and Pensacola, assuring him, at the same time, of the additional assistance he would afford me were he able to accompany them. I called likewise on General Lovell, at New Orleans. To General Van Dorn, then in Arkansas with some twenty thousand men, I sent a most pressing message, inviting him to join me, *via* New Madrid or Columbus, with as large a portion of his forces as possible. In my letter to him I said :

“By the fall of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, the forces under General Polk (now to be under me) are entirely cut off from those under General A. S. Johnston, and must henceforth depend upon themselves alone for the defense of the Mississippi River and contiguous States: the fall of Columbus, and of Island No. 10, must necessarily be followed by the loss of the whole Mississippi River. The fate of Missouri necessarily depends on the successful defense of Columbus and of Island No. 10: hence, we must, if possible, combine our operations not only to defend those positions, but also to take the offensive as soon as practicable, to recover some lost ground.” \*

I also sent a messenger (Lieutenant, afterward Brigadier-General S. W. Ferguson) to General Johnston, in order to obtain his co-operation to my plan if he could give it. He was then at Murfreesboro, actively engaged with his retreat from Nashville, on the Stevenson and Chattanooga Railroad.

My messengers were all members of my personal and general staff. They left my head-quarters, at Jackson, Tennessee, on the 22d of February.

I advised the War Department of what I had done, and asked for whatever instructions it might deem expedient to give me. It neither sanctioned nor disapproved the course I had followed.

General Johnston readily acceded to my request, and took up a new line of march toward Decatur, through Shelbyville, Fayetteville and Huntsville. Left to his own discretion by the War Department, as to whether to comply with my demand or not, General Bragg concluded to give his assent, and furnished me with some ten thousand men of all arms. General Lovell did all he possibly could under the circumstances. The governors of the four States already mentioned, used every exertion in their power to respond to my urgent call upon them. I could get no immediate answer from General Van Dorn, whose whereabouts just

\* The whole letter is given in “*Military Operations of General Beauregard*,” Vol. I., Chap. XVI., p. 242.

then were not very definite. He showed, however, much willingness to assist me, when free to do so, but did not reach the scene of operations in time.

Columbus was evacuated on the 2d of March. The enemy did not show the vigilance and boldness which it was reasonable to expect he would, and thus indirectly facilitated our work. After the evacuation, about seven thousand men of General Polk's forces were placed under General McCown, at New Madrid, some sixty miles below Columbus and not more than ten miles from Island No. 10. The main body of General Polk's command was collected at Humboldt, which was central to Memphis, Jackson, Grand Junction, Henderson, Corinth, and Fort Pillow. A rear guard of two regiments and about five hundred cavalry were stationed at Union City, in the direction of Lexington; the cavalry to be well in advance from Hickman to Paris. The movements of the enemy were watched by mounted parties, provided with pieces of light artillery, who had been ordered to patrol the west bank of the Tennessee, and inform me of anything unusual that might attract their attention.

Reports, in the main reliable, having soon reached me, that the enemy was preparing a great offensive demonstration from Cairo, Paducah and Fort Henry, while General Pope was on his march to New Madrid, it became plain to me that danger threatened us from the Tennessee River, which, if well founded, might completely separate General Johnston's army from the forces under General Polk, and thus place the former, as well as the latter, at the mercy of the overwhelming masses which would undoubtedly be thrown against them. It was at this precise moment that I fixed upon Corinth as the best point of concentration on our part, and as the natural Confederate base for any offensive operations of our forces. To say that any one—including General Johnston and myself—had thought of Corinth, and could have designated it as the strategic point of the Shiloh campaign, before the enemy had given evidence of any hostile movement from or near Pittsburg Landing, on the Tennessee River, is sheer folly, and scarcely needs contradiction to be so pronounced. But to say, furthermore, as has been the case, that General Johnston "*sent me,*" when we last parted, at Edgefield, opposite Nashville, on the 14th of February, or at any time before, or at any time after, "*with instructions to concentrate all available forces near Corinth—a movement*



*previously begun*” \*—is not only absolutely imaginary, but a most positive attempt to pervert the truth of history. General Johnston never made even the slightest allusion to Corinth, in any of our conferences about his future plans of operations or mine. I never received a word of instructions from him about concentrating there, or elsewhere. He only agreed to form a junction with me, after General Ferguson had seen him, in my name, with the request that he should change his line of retreat and shorten the distance between our two armies, instead of increasing it, as he was actually doing, when met by my messenger at Murfreesboro, on the 22d or 23d of February. It was wholly at my suggestion and urgent request that he marched his army to Corinth. In fact, he believed it to be “a hazardous experiment,” situated as he then was, as he states himself, in his letter of March 18, to President Davis.

On the 2d of March I dispatched another messenger to him—Colonel (then Captain) Otey, of my staff, with the following letter :

“DEAR GENERAL :—I send you herewith inclosed a slip showing the intended movements of the enemy, no doubt against the troops in Western Tennessee. I think you ought to hurry up your troops to Corinth by railroad, as soon as practicable, for there or thereabouts will soon be fought the great battle of this controversy.”

General Johnston’s answer, through Colonel Mackall, his adjutant, was dated from Fayetteville, March 5, 1862, and ran thus :

“GENERAL :—Your letter of 2d instant has been received by General Johnston. He replies : The army advancing, had reached this place ; on arriving at Decatur, he will decide on the promptest mode.”

I had now fair reason to hope that all our forces, including General Johnston’s small army, and the troops forthcoming from Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, would soon be collected at the point selected by me, and that, should the Federal commander show too much boldness on the west bank of the Tennessee, we could successfully check his course, before allowing him to further develop his ulterior plans. Pittsburg Landing, it seemed to me from a critical study of the map and of the reported movements of the enemy, would be one of the points selected by him to effect a landing. General Ruggles, by my order, caused a regi-

\* See Colonel W. P. Johnston’s article in the “Century Magazine” of February, 1885, p. 618.

ment—the 18th Louisiana—to be sent there as a corps of observation. The attempted landing of a Federal force, supported by two gunboats, which was repulsed the next day by that regiment, proves that I was not mistaken.

On the 6th, General Bragg's forces began to arrive. They were pushed on to Corinth, as originally decided upon; and General Bragg was instructed by me to lose no time in organizing into brigades and divisions his own and all the troops then coming in from various points. I also directed him to inspect the position at Monterey, midway between Corinth and Pittsburg Landing, with a view to adopt it, instead of Corinth, as our chief point of concentration, should the enemy evince a serious intent to select Pittsburg—and not Eastport—for a permanent disembarkment. General Bragg was of opinion that Corinth offered greater facilities for transportation, and it therefore remained, as at first intended by me, “the grand central point for the rallying and concentration of all the Confederate forces.” \*

I deem it unnecessary, for the purposes of this paper, to dwell upon the difficulties I experienced at that time, through the want of field officers, for the complete organization of the troops that were being conveyed from the States already referred to, in response to my call upon them. The indifference and apparent unwillingness of the War Department, as evidenced in that connection, was a great source of perplexity to me, and one of the main causes of our inability to begin, as early as I would have otherwise wished, the aggressive movement which was being prepared against the enemy at Pittsburg Landing.

I officially assumed command, on the 5th of March, of the military district assigned to me. One of the first steps taken by me, in view of the evacuation of Columbus and of the concentration of our troops at or near Corinth, was to cause sufficient supplies of grain and provisions to be gathered at Union City, Humboldt, Jackson, and Henderson, in Western Tennessee, and at Corinth, Grand Junction, and Iuka, in Mississippi. My principal supplying depots were Columbus, Mississippi, and Grenada.

On the 13th of March, five Federal divisions, reinforced a few days later by five thousand men, under General C. F. Smith, ar-

\* “Military Operations of General Beauregard,” Vol. I., Chap. XVII., p. 251.

rived at Savannah, twelve miles below Pittsburg Landing, on the opposite side of the Tennessee River. They aggregated some forty-three thousand men of all arms. General Sherman's division, without effecting a landing at Savannah, had been sent up the river, with a view, it was said, to destroy the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, at a short distance from Eastport. It was kept in check and deterred from even attempting to accomplish its purpose by two companies of infantry, acting as artillery, and belonging to General Chalmers' command—some 2,500 men—stationed near Iuka, five or six miles from the river. It attempted immediately afterward—but with no better success—to burn some railroad shops near Burnsville, eight miles west of Iuka, and finally “dropped down to Pittsburg Landing on the night of the 14th (March), having made a useless demonstration, but one which confirmed me in the opinion that Corinth would be the final objective point of the Federal movement.”\* About that time, a small bridge, twenty-four miles north of Corinth, near Bethel Station, was burned by a raiding party from General McClernand's division, which had been detached to destroy the Mobile and Ohio Railroad between Corinth and Jackson, but utterly failed to do so. There was hesitancy, then, on the part of the enemy. He was feeling his way, and with more than ordinary caution. General Grant had not yet assumed command, and, as he states,† was “virtually in arrest, on board a steamer,” near Fort Henry. He only arrived, and officially relieved General Smith, on or about the 17th of March.

On the other hand, General Pope had appeared before New Madrid, on the 3d of March. He had with him some twenty-five thousand men. He really and seriously began his attack on the 12th, and reduced the works, after no great effort on his part, on the night of the 14th. He was thus, consciously or not, co-operating with the movements of the Federals on the Tennessee River. General McCown saved his men, however, and had them transferred to the other side of the river. Most of them were sent to support the batteries at Island No. 10. General McCown was subsequently relieved from his duties, and General Mackall, General

\* “Military Operations of General Beauregard,” Vol. I., Chap. XVIII., p. 256.

† See General Grant's article in the “Century Magazine” of February, 1885, p. 594.

Johnston's able chief of staff, took command in his place. On the 16th, Commodore Foote's fleet of gunboats and mortar boats began the regular bombardment of Island No. 10. More endurance was exhibited there than at New Madrid. In fact, the garrison behaved creditably to itself and its commanders. But the easy fall of New Madrid, led, almost inevitably, to the fall of Island No. 10.

When, in my opinion, the enemy had sufficiently shown what his purpose was, I hurried the concentration of all the forces I could dispose of in Western Tennessee and Northern Mississippi. By the middle of March I had successfully collected and gathered, within short and easy marching from Corinth, about twenty-three thousand men of all arms, exclusive of the forces originally under General Polk—some fourteen thousand men—which raised my aggregate to forty-four thousand men, more or less, of all arms. The greatest number of them were very indifferently armed and equipped. Some even—the cavalry especially—had no arms at all. They were mostly raw troops, unhabituated to camp life, undisciplined, and hardly drilled. But they were composed of the best element in the South, and had answered the call of their respective governors, and my own, with the determination of doing their whole duty toward the cause they had espoused.

General Johnston had been advised of all the dispositions I had taken for the troops thus being sent to me. He had invariably approved of all I had done; though, in his opinion, as appears by the following telegram—not generally known, and which I here append—Corinth was too near the Tennessee River to be considered the best point of concentration for our forces. The telegram read thus:

“DECATUR, *March 15, 1862.*

“TO GENERAL G. T. BEAUREGARD:

“Have you had the south bank of the Hatchee examined, near Bolivar? I recommend it to your attention. It has, besides the other advantages, that of being further from the enemy's line.”

I could not agree with General Johnston in that regard, and although ready to admit that, under ordinary circumstances, a good defensive line might have been established near Bolivar, at the spot designated in the foregoing telegram, it was not, by far,

the best one to be selected just then, in order to carry out the aggressive movement I was preparing, and for which I had even suggested Monterey, instead of Corinth, because of its greater proximity to Pittsburg Landing.

The whole Federal force destined for operations on the Tennessee River, under General Grant, were now assembled at Pittsburg Landing, with the exception of General Lew Wallace's division—about seven thousand men—which had been stationed at Crump's Landing, some five miles below Pittsburg, by General Smith, and left there by General Grant, who considered the position "so well chosen" that no orders were given to change it, "until the Confederate attack at Shiloh."\* In fact, General Grant, even as late as the 5th of April, as he admitted himself, "felt by no means certain that Crump's Landing might not be the point of attack."†

General Buell, with seven divisions, aggregating an effective force of over seventy-three thousand men, had quietly remained at Nashville, after the fall of that place, and had not materially interfered with General Johnston's retreat, first to Murfreesboro, afterward to Fayetteville, Huntsville, Decatur, and finally to Corinth. He was at last ordered (March 15) by General Halleck to form a junction with the forces operating under General Grant, on the Tennessee. He only had five divisions with him at that time, or some forty thousand men of all arms. The two other divisions, namely, the seventh, under General G. W. Morgan, and the third, under General O. M. Mitchell, had been detached from his main army, for some special purpose; partly, it was said, for the destruction of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and partly for a raiding incursion in East Tennessee. General Buell's destination was, first, Savannah, and then Pittsburg Landing; though it seems he was not personally informed of the change; for during his march, which only averaged some eleven miles a day he had determined to move to Hamburg, six miles above Pittsburg, and there to await further instructions.

The great point for us, and the essential feature of the campaign, was to strike a blow upon the enemy in our front before General Buell's junction with General Grant. My efforts tended

\* General Grant's article in "Century Magazine," of February, 1885, p. 594.

† *Idem.*, p. 595.

to nothing else. But I knew that, with the forces under me, gathered as they had been, and under such difficulties, no chance of success existed, were I to attempt an aggressive movement upon the combined forces under Generals Grant and Buell, which would have aggregated from eighty to eighty-five thousand effectives of all arms. I informed General Johnston of the fact, urging him again to hurry on with his army, and I also renewed my call upon the War Department for the field officers I had so often—but thus far uselessly—asked for.

General Johnston arrived at Corinth late on the 22d of March. His army came in after him but followed closely, the last files of his columns reaching their place of rendezvous on the 27th. One of his corps, under General Hardee, was stationed in the near vicinity of Corinth. It consisted of about eight thousand men. The other corps—some five thousand more, exclusive of cavalry—commanded by General Crittenden, took position at Burnsville and Iuka, on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad.

I had scarcely explained to General Johnston the situation around us, the position of the enemy in our front, and the most important details of the organization of the forces under me, in view of the plans he had already been advised of, when, to my surprise, he gravely and impressively declared, with visible emotion, that, with my consent, he would turn over to me the direct command of all the troops now collected at Corinth, including his own, and confine himself exclusively to the duties of department commander, establishing for the purpose his head-quarters at Memphis or Holly Springs. He said that, in his opinion, the adoption of such a course would instill renewed confidence in the people, and even in the army, and eventually benefit the success of our cause. I thoroughly appreciated the motives actuating him, and admired and esteemed him all the more for it. I refused, none the less, to acquiesce in his proposal, and did so in terms befitting the occasion. There was no possibility for misinterpretation on my part as to the "spirit and intention" of General Johnston's offer to me.\* It was plain and significant, and I understood it.

It was then agreed that, together—he, as first in command, I as second—we would undertake the task laid out before us, and do

\* See Colonel W. P. Johnston's article in the "Century Magazine" of February, 1885, p. 619.

our best to achieve success. With his authorization, and in fact at his request, I drew up the plan reorganizing the "Army of the Mississippi," as it was then called, which was approved of and signed by him, as commander-in-chief, and subsequently published to our united forces, on the 29th of March, as a General Orders.\*

The army, as it now stood was divided into three corps: the first, under Major-General Polk, consisted of the Grand Division, as originally organized in his former military district, except as to the artillery and cavalry, otherwise disposed of, and excepting also the troops in garrison at Fort Pillow, Island No. 10, and the other works on the Mississippi River. The second, under Major-General Bragg, was called the Second Division of the Army of the Mississippi, with the same limitations as to artillery, cavalry and the reserves. The third corps was under Major-General Hardee. It consisted of the Army of Kentucky, that is to say, of the troops which had followed General Johnston from Bowling Green and Nashville, subject to the same restrictions with regard to artillery, cavalry and the reserves. The infantry reserves, withdrawn from the three corps, as indicated above, formed a division of at least two brigades. They were placed at first under General Crittenden, and very soon subsequently under Brigadier-General Breckinridge.

As Colonel Mackall, General Johnston's former adjutant, had been recently promoted and sent in command of one of the river defenses, General (then Colonel) Thomas Jordan, my chief of staff, was announced, in General Orders, as Adjutant-General of the united forces of the Army of the Mississippi.

My hope had been that our onward movement could begin on the 1st of April. I knew that General Buell was, at that time, at or near Franklin, and that several bridges—and among them an important one on Duck River—had been destroyed on the route he was following, and I counted upon these and similar hinderances to delay and otherwise embarrass his march. Our deficiencies were such, however, and so great was the inexperience of some of our subordinate commanders, so complete also our lack of engineers, inspectors, and other field officers, that, to my extreme disappoint-

\* See paper referred to in "Military Operations of General Beauregard," Vol. I., Chap. XIX., pp. 267, 268.

ment, our forces were not ready and did not make the projected advance as early as I had wished and striven to have it done.

A crisis was now unexpectedly brought upon us by the fact of a telegram being sent by General Cheatham to General Polk, his corps commander, stating that late on the evening of the 2d of April, at or near Bethel Station, twenty-four miles north of Corinth, where he was stationed, a large body of the enemy, which he took to be General Lew Wallace's division, had suddenly appeared in his front, with an apparent purpose of attack. General Polk forwarded the dispatch to Colonel Jordan, the adjutant-general, who immediately sent it to my quarters. I read it, thought over it a moment, and believing from its context that the enemy had divided his forces to carry out his reported incursion against Bethel—for nothing showed General Cheatham's surmise as to Lew Wallace's division to be correct—I ordered the telegram carried to General Johnston, after writing the following words on the back of it :

“Now is the moment to advance and strike the enemy at Pittsburg Landing.”

Late as it was (nearly eleven o'clock P.M.) Colonel Jordan repaired to General Johnston's head-quarters, and handed him the dispatch with my indorsement. He went with it to General Bragg's quarters, nearly opposite his own, and asked him to take cognizance of it. General Bragg did so and declared himself in favor of the suggestion. General Johnston was, at first, of a different opinion, which he urged with his usual earnestness. He thought our forces were not in a condition, at that moment, for such an onset, and that it would not be possible to collect our reserves in time. Colonel Jordan reassured him on that point, and added that, by hurrying the advance as suggested, my conviction was that we would take the enemy by surprise, and thus deal him a much heavier blow than by further delaying our projected plan ; that we were as ready now as we could expect to be a few days later, when General Buell, in all likelihood, would have already effected his junction with General Grant. General Johnston thereupon yielded his assent, and instructed Colonel Jordan to prepare the necessary orders in view of the movement. This is in contrast with what was lately written about General Johnston's plan of campaign, and his eagerness, at that time, for “immediate



and decisive action ;” while, on the other hand, it is stated, General Bragg and myself were endeavoring to retard the attack for the purpose of “thorough reorganization.”\*

The substance of the orders thus prepared by Colonel Jordan, without leaving General Bragg’s room, was, that Generals Bragg, Polk and Hardee should “hold their several corps in condition to move at a moment’s notice, having forty rounds of ammunition in their cartridge-boxes, and three days’ cooked rations in their haversacks ; also, sixty rounds of ammunition and uncooked rations in wagons for three days, etc.”†

Couriers were sent, that very night, with copies of said orders to Generals Polk and Hardee. General Breckinridge was notified by telegraphic dispatch. General Bragg needed no copy of the circular order, as he was present while it was being written at his own quarters.

G. P. T. BEAUREGARD.

\* See Colonel W. P. Johnston’s article in the “Century Magazine” of February, 1885, p. 619.

† See General Jordan’s report of his mission to General Johnston, on the night of the 2d of April, 1862.

*(To be concluded.)*